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13 February 1950

MEMORANDUM

TO : Office of the General Counsel

THROUGH: Chief, S S S

FROM : Finance Division

SUBJECT: Reduced Round-trip Rates Between the United States and Foreign Countries

1. The attached opinion of the Budget Officer is, of course, the normal interpretation of the relevant portion of the Standardized Government Travel Regulations. I, naturally, concur with this interpretation under normal circumstances.

2. Reference is made to the Comptroller General's Decision B-64534, Volume 26, pages 787 through 790. It appears to me that the decision emphasizes the fact that "official justification" negates the requirement to purchase round-trip tickets whenever practicable and economical, and that where there is a specific authorization or approval, it may be assumed that the requirement has been satisfied.

3. In the case of this Agency, could not certain abnormal circumstances be determined of sufficient importance to constitute "official justification"? Such determination would, of course, be a matter of policy decision by the proper authority. Illustrations of the various factors which might be considered in reaching such a policy decision could include the following:

- a. Curtailment of the period of absence from a foreign station during periods of home leave. This is unusually important, to this Agency, since in many cases no replacement employee or absorption of duties by other employees is possible during the period of absence. If this is a worthwhile objective, travel by air, round-trip or either way would be beneficial.
- b. The existence of actual economies in the form of reduced per diems to employees and dependents as between travel by air and sea which more than offset any available economies through the use of round-trip air transportation, and which would be lost if the employee chose to travel by sea.
- c. Recognition of the fact that during the abnormally-lengthy period between the return of a traveler from a foreign post for home leave, retraining and orientation and his return to his foreign post, various changes could occur in the

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health of the employee or his dependents, which would make air travel a physical or mental hardship. Examples might include sinus conditions, pregnancy, or the birth of additional dependents.

4. I would appreciate your opinions along these lines, particularly because they seem to have a bearing on an allied problem. A similar requirement of the Standardized Travel Regulations pertains to the purchase of through tickets on the original mode of travel, where an economy to the Government can be achieved. This raises the serious problem of the travel of employees by air to ports of embarkation on ships when through travel to the ultimate destination by air is available at a lesser cost to the Government. Since this is an every-day occurrence in this Agency, an expedited reply is requested.



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Acting Chief, Finance Division

Attachments

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